

U.S. Mint Rounds Out 1999 with New Quarter Honoring Connecticut

October 7, 1999

Connecticut Quarter Features the Charter Oak, a Piece of Colonial American History

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Mint announced today the launch of the Connecticut state quarter, the fifth quarter in the Mint's 50 State Quarters series. Connecticut was the fifth state to ratify the Constitution and join the Union, and will now be honored as the last state quarter of the 20th Century.

Kermit the Frog, the official "spokesfrog" for the 50 State Quarters Program, joined the director of the Mint, Philip N. Diehl at the Philadelphia Mint for the official ceremonial striking of Connecticut quarter, which will be shipped to the Federal Reserve Banks on October 12th.

As the official "spokesfrog," Kermit has raised public awareness of the 50 State Quarters Program via an extensive print and broadcast campaign to educate Americans about the new quarters.

"Issuing the first five quarters of The 50 State Quarters Program gives us a great opportunity to look back on the success of the program over the past year," said Philip N. Diehl, director of the U.S. Mint. "The Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Georgia quarters have each been greeted with tremendous excitement from the public, and we have no doubt the Connecticut quarter will get a similar reception."

"Connecticut's roots are deeply steeped in American history, so we are especially proud to feature the Charter Oak on the Connecticut quarter," said John Rowland, governor of Connecticut. "Being the last State Quarter issued in this century is a great honor for the citizens of Connecticut."

Overall public awareness for the 50 State Quarters Program is extraordinarily high after only eight months. Mint market research indicates that 70% of all adults have seen at least one of the new quarters. More than 91 million American adults are actively collecting the state quarters and 61% of all adults say they intend to collect them. Demand for quarters has doubled since the program began in January, and is now running at 5 billion per year. Public demand for 50 State Quarters products has driven Mint Internet sales of collectible coins to \$1 – \$1.5 million a week.

The Connecticut quarter reverse (tails) features the Charter Oak, a white oak tree that until 1856 stood in Hartford, Connecticut. The history of the Charter Oak began on October 31, 1687, when Sir Edmund Andros, a British representative for King James II, demanded the surrender of Connecticut's Charter, a document that allowed Connecticut to maintain an independent, self-reliant colonial government. During the heated discussion, with the Charter on the table between the opposing parties, the candles were mysteriously snuffed out. When they were re-lighted, the Connecticut Charter was gone, saved by Captain Joseph Wadsworth from the hands of the British and hidden in a hollow of the majestic 1,000-year-old white oak, henceforth known as the Charter Oak.

Legislation signed by the President in late 1997 authorized the Mint to honor the 50 states in the order they entered the Union or ratified the Constitution by producing five quarters each year from 1999 through 2008 with reverse designs celebrating the heritage of each state. The design process for each quarter is determined within each state by the Governor before design concepts are sent to the Mint, and then returned to the states for final selection. Approval of the final design rests with the Treasury Secretary. The well-known "Eagle" reverse quarter is scheduled to resume in 2009.

The 50 State Quarters are manufactured at both the Philadelphia and Denver Mints, which produce all legal tender U.S. circulating coins, before being shipped to the Federal Reserve for distribution through the banking system. The Federal Reserve orders new quarters to ensure an adequate supply to meet the needs of commerce as commercial banks demand. The Mint projects production of 650 to 750 million quarters of each state design.

For more information on the 50 State Quarters and how to collect them, visit the Mint's web site at www.usmint.gov.

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